

I raised azaleas and still do. I show when I can. At the last show, my granddaughter and I garnered several blue ribbons (much to my surprise and many others, too).

"Where did you get those blooms?" someone asked.

"I swiped them from my neighbor's yard," I retorted.

Creech was one of the most unpretentious and kindest men I've ever known. I think he recognized a craving in me for doing something besides surgery. He knew I wanted to create things and had decided to do it with these lovely ericaceous plants. And so, like a teacher should, he encouraged it, without my being conscious of it. When friends and others ask how I, a surgeon with the IQ of an oak tree, got into this hobby, I smile and say: John Creech. I'll miss him, but a person lives on when he's remembered, and I shall never forget him.

John Keshishian is a semi-retired academic surgeon who specialized in cardiothoracic and vascular surgery. He has been a professor of surgery, chief of his division, and chief of his medical staff at the Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. Over a span of fifty years, he has been involved in medical research, teaching, photography, writing, and archeology. He has served as consultant to many organizations including the National Geographic Society, NASA, the State Department, and the FDA to name a few.

In the mid 1950's, he discovered the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station and met John Creech, which led to a new appreciation for azaleas and rhododendrons. In 1973, he introduced 'Henry Allanson', an open pollinated mollis seedling--- a picture of which is featured on the cover of the ARS Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. 27, No. 3, July 1973.

He and his wife Nancy Lee live in Northern Virginia.

In Memory

William F. Steele, Jr.

By William C. Miller III, Bethesda, Maryland

It is my sad duty to report the passing of Bill Steele, 81, on February 21, 2010, after a valiant battle with cancer. Born on January 9, 1929, he was the son of William F. and Frances Sharpless Steele.

He began his career working at Steele's Chevrolet in Clifton Heights, just west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended and completed the Dealership Program at the General Motors Institute (now Kettering University) in Flint, Michigan, and went on to become part owner of the dealership.

During the Korean War, he served as an artillery officer. A 1947 graduate of West Chester High School, he went on to receive his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from West Chester State Teachers College and

West Chester University. He began his educational career teaching mathematics at Springfield Junior-Senior High School in Delaware County, and later at Brandywine School where he established the Ski Club. Skiing was to become a lifelong activity which brought him almost as much pleasure as gardening.

Bill and his wife, "Mich," operated a small specialty nursery geared toward the azalea and lepidote collector. They joined the ASA around 1984 and affiliated with the Brookside Gardens Chapter. One of the early signs of spring for me was the arrival of Bill's annual azalea sale advertisement which listed the many (2,600+) azaleas and small-leaved rhododendrons that he had available. In a somewhat unique approach, they limited sales to three weekends a year: the last weekend of April and the first two weekends of May—although they unofficially welcomed visitors at other times. Bill's list of plants was six or seven pages in four columns. It was so extensive and current that it served as a useful quick reference.

Bill had an inquiring mind and he enjoyed taking on little research projects. As an example, in 1998, he began to hear reports of "spotting" on azalea leaves from friends and colleagues on Long Island, in northern New Jersey, the mainline area of Philadelphia, and one isolated case in central New Jersey. To make a long story short, he pursued the mystery, contacting many state and federal experts, until it was solved. The cause was the maple mealy bug, *Phenacoccus acericola*. For the complete story, see *What Are Those Spots, The Azalean*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 2000.

Bill's many contributions to the azalea and rhododendron community did not go unappreciated or unrecognized. In 1992, he and Mich were awarded a Bronze Medal by the Valley Forge Chapter of the ARS, the highest honor a chapter can bestow. On the national level, he served as National Chairman of the Azalea Committee of the ARS. In 2000, in recognition of his many contributions to the azalea community, Bill was awarded the Frederic P. Lee Commendation by the Brookside Gardens Chapter of the ASA. See the Web page at: <http://www.azaleas.org/images/FPLeeSteele.jpg>

Memorial contributions in his name may be made to: Neighborhood Hospice, 400 East Marshall Street, West Chester, PA 19380; Jenkins Arboretum, 631 Berwyn Baptist Road, Devon, PA 19333; or Chester County Hematology Oncology Services, 440 E. Marshall Street, West Chester 19380.

Call for Articles

The Azalean needs articles about azaleas, their care, and their use in the landscape. Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged.

Submit articles to: Pam Fitch; Editor, *The Azalean*; P.O. Box 632537; Nacogdoches, TX 75963 or e-mail: theazalean@gmail.com.